

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Application ID: 14ED157465

Program Name: The Choice Programs, UMBC EAP

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

Strengths:

The applicant provided clear and supportive data to support the need for intervention of at-risk youth in Baltimore.

The applicant was persuasive in establishing connections between the areas of need among the Baltimore youth and the proposed areas of educational, vocational, and behavioral interventions to be provided by trained AmeriCorps members.

The applicant provides clear and specific statistical data that support the need of the community.

The applicant presents a compelling case that, due to the high poverty, dropout, and unemployment rate, the community is in need of support from the Members.

The applicant clearly articulates the need to improve graduation and unemployment rates in the target area of Baltimore and provides specific data showing that Baltimore City's percentage of youth in group homes as well as youth on youth violence in juvenile detention centers significantly outdistances the national average.

The applicant relates comprehensive, data-driven information addressing the serious, long-term effects of poverty, especially as it relates to confined youth.

The applicant presents an overall sound and comprehensive program which targets four areas of need, as demonstrated by relevant evidence, in which the interventions may lead to desired outcomes.

The rationale for the use of AmeriCorps members in this program was well-described, specifically with regard to mentorship and their ability to serve as positive adult role models to the target population.

The applicant cited two studies which showed that there was a positive correlation between community-based

intensive supervision program and school performance. This suggests that the proposed program will have a positive impact on the youths' academic performance.

The applicant provided a sound reason as to why AmeriCorps members are a highly effective means to impact the defined needs. The applicant related that AmeriCorps members, recent college graduates, are uniquely suited to address the needs and concerns of youth and families in the program.

The applicant articulates a consistent and well-aligned Theory of Change which demonstrates a logical relationship between inputs, activities, outcomes, and outputs.

The applicant received funding support from the Maryland Department of Juveniles Services for adding more teams to serve the community, which suggests that they provided good quality services in previous programs.

The applicant's past performance demonstrates success in terms of numbers served and desired outcomes for the first three years.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not cite many of the provided data which makes it difficult to determine when and where the data were obtained.

The applicant presents limited information about the scope of the needs in the Delaware area relating to improving graduation and unemployment rates and decreasing youth on youth violence in juvenile detention centers.

The logic model presented by the applicant did not sufficiently describe the activities as they pertain to the four intervention efforts, making it difficult to align inputs and activities to outcomes.

Evidence to support the dosage/duration of the intervention was absent.

Descriptions of the activities were limited and made it difficult to determine whether or not these activities were capable of leading to desired outcomes.

The applicant provides limited descriptions of the activities that the Members will do.

The applicant cited limited studies that support the effectiveness of their program model.

Because the applicant does not address how AmeriCorps members will be leveraged in the areas to be served, it is difficult to discern how the intervention aligns with the stated needs in *each* target area.

Insufficient evidence was presented to support the applicant's claim that the program had consistently exceeded its goals.

Enrollment efforts were hindered by factors such as budget and negotiations which only shows limitations in past performance.

The applicant had compliance issues, such as Member and site management. Neither these issues nor how they were resolved were further described.

The applicant did not fulfill the enrollment requirement in the 2nd grant year. Additionally, the applicant does not further discuss how they solved the problem so it doesn't occur again.

The applicant does not demonstrate successful past performance in the AmeriCorps member enrollment efforts during the second year in that all the slots were not filled.